DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 184 903 SO 011 867

AUTHOR Singleton, John
TITLE Schooling after Childhood: The Schooling Rituals of Anthropologists.
PUB DATE Nov 78
NOTE 10p.; Paper prepared for Symposium on the Anthropology of Anthropology at Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association (Los Angeles, CA, November 14-18, 1978). Not available from EDRS in paper copy due to poor reproducibility of original document.

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Anthropology; *Educational Needs; *Educational Practices; Evaluation Methods; *Graduate Students; *Graduate Study; Higher Education; Play; Professional Training; Research Needs; Student Recruitment; Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

The paper explores the social and cultural processes in the schooling rituals of graduate students in anthropology. Four areas of concern are noted. The first area concerns rites of passage and professional competence. The author explains that the period of graduate professional schooling represents the second stage of a rite of passage after one has been separated from the crowd (admitted to graduate study) and before the time of incorporation into the new social identity of an anthropologist. The problems inherent in this area are that the models of ritual initiation and institutionalized ordeals (testing and evaluation procedures) do not simulate or stimulate the competencies needed by a creative professional. The second area involves socialization to bureaucratic dependency. Presently, the goal of most anthropology departments is to turn out initiates who will succeed in the fierce competition for prestigious university appointments; applied jobs are for those who don't capture an academic slot. The third area is the contradiction between deductive teaching methods and the need for the anthropologist to conduct inductive research. The recruitment of inexperenced graduate students reinforces the tendency to teach didactically. The author suggests recruiting people with previous cross-cultural experience and with some history of an ability to survive on their own. The final area concerns the need for playfulness as a strategy for the initiation and continuing education of the anthropologist. The conclusion is that playfulness can be a productive intellectual tool. (Author/KC)

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SCHOOLING AFTER CHILDHOOD: THE SCHOOLING RITUALS OF ANTHROPOLOGISTS

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by

John Singleton

International and Development Education Program
School of Education

University of Pittsburgh

Prepared for

Symposium on the Anthropology of Anthropology

American Anthropological Association Annual Meetings

Los Angeles, November 14-18, 1978

SO 011 867

Anthropologists, as members of an academic tribe, participate in rituals of professional recruitment, socialization, and initiation. Such rituals, usually carried out in graduate "training" programs are generally thought to be efficacious in transmitting the tribal culture and in creating professional competency. Because our folk term for professional socialization is "training," we may tend to conceptualize learning processes in the style of behaviorists like B. F. Skinner who built their models of learning from experiments with white rats running mazes or pigeons trained to guide World War II bombs to their targets. From the viewpoint of an educational anthropologist, I would suggest that we should speak of our professional socialization as "cultural transmission," built upon the model of enculturation developed in the study of small, exotic cultures. From this perspective, the worldview of anthropology is the cultural content of our disciplinary tribe and the schooling rituals of our universities are our social instruments for transmitting the culture of anthropology. These schooling rituals are the carriers of "a time-tested and group-licensed way of seeing" (Kuhn 1970:189)--which is also a definition of science made by Thomas Kuhn.

This implies that the knowledge of our scientific community is much more than some set of specific skills or an accumulation of content and information (as might be suggested from a university catalog of course descriptions). It is the complex worldview of our tribe. In educational anthropology, there are several analytic models upon which we could draw to demonstrate this perspective of the discipline. An ethnographic study might, for instance, study the professional socialization of a specific group of neophytes as Alan Howard did among Rotuman children (1970) or as Howard Becker and his associates studied the education and the student culture of a group of medical students (1961).

On the other hand, one might use an ethnological model to make comparative statements and suggest hypotheses for specific ethnographic investigation in the cultural context of our discipline--much as Margaret Mead (1970) and George Pettitt (1943) have done. It is this latter model which I propose to use here. As an educator, I cannot resist adding some prescriptive suggestions to my analysis.

This paper calls attention to some social and cultural processes in the schooling rituals of anthropologists as we initiate our neophytes into the tribal worldview. The focus is upon social selection, cultural transmission, and identity change that occur in the professional socialization of anthropologists. It should be noted, of course, that the rituals of schooling are

not the only means of socialization in our tribe. Our annual meetings are, for instance, themselves a powerful educational and ritual device.

Areas of concern to be explored in this presentation include: (1) the conflict between models of ritual transition in the rites of professional passage and our images of desired professional competence, (2) patterns of paternalism and socialization to bureaucratic dependency aimed at our students, (3) the contradiction in cultural anthropology between inductive research models and the deductive organization of teaching, and (4) the significance of playfulness in professional socialization.

1. Rites of Passage and Professional Competence

The period of graduate professional schooling is a time of transition for the novice, a period of liminality in Victor Turner's and Arnold Van Gennep's terms, the second stage of a rite of passage after one has been separated out of the crowd (admitted to graduate study) and before the time of incorporation into the new social identity of anthropologist. The whole process is importantly defined by the change of social identity, and one does not avoid ritual participation by skipping graduation ceremonies. The whole process of graduate training is itself a ritual.

As Goodenough said,

> Elaborate initiations into new social identities are by no means confined to primitive or underdeveloped societies.... They are matched in our own with the acquisition of one's occupational identity...[for instance] Graduate student(s) working for their Ph. D. degree(s) are subjected to institutionalized physical and mental ordeals, tests of competence, and organized hazing. At the same time, they receive instruction in the performance of their future occupational roles, are let in on professional secrets, and are indoctrinated with a code of "pofessional ethics." (p. 216)

While engaged in this transitional process of identity change, anthropology graduate students may tend to be like the neophytes in more traditional rites of passage whom Turner describes.

> Their behavior is normally passive or humble; they must obey their instructors implicitly, and accept arbitrary punishment without complaint. It is as though they are being reduced or ground down to a uniform condition to be fashioned anew and endowed with additional powers to enable them to cope with their new station in life. (p. 95)

Goodenough said it well, "The psychology of identity change does not vary according to the god or message in whose name such change is undertaken." (Goodenough p. 219)

Ten years ago, while looking at the organization of graduate education in our sister discipline of psychology, Carl Rogers listed some of the implicit assumptions he had observed. Violating his personal faith in the potentiality and wisdom of human beings, was the major assumption that "The student cannot be trusted to pursue his own scientific and professional learning."(1969:171) Faculty were so busy assigning work, supervising its completion, and setting formal evaluation of student progress that it looked as if evaluation and test-setting was considered to be the basic educational process! Watching the student behaviors rewarded by faculty in their evaluation, it seemed that they believed that "creative scientists develop from passive learners." Don't anthropologists often make similar assumptions?

While these assumptions fit the ritual model of liminality I have been describing, I would hope that someone would be as angry as Carl Rogers and rise to ask whether these are, indeed, appropriate processes and assumptions for the task of professional socialization. We should, of course, recognize the values of a ritual affirmation of the identity changes a professional neophyte must undergo, but we can surely question whether the model of professional practice we wish to achieve is served by the tasks and tests we devise for our neophytes' education.

For example, in the simple matter of testing, we should recognize our participation in the overwhelming uniformity of school practice in our society--and here I refer specifically to North American school practice. Our tests are, by and large, teacher-constructed, designed for objectivity in evaluation, and pervasive. More importantly they are a specific artifact of the schools and of only a few related bureaucratic organizations--notably the civil service. Test-taking is a school-specific skill, the results of which we rely upon for assessing and advancing students on their way to a professional credential. Once initiated, a professional will not again face such an ordeal.

Two drawbacks of conventional testing procedures which should be noted are: (1) they rarely encourage a creative professional response--test-wise students know that they must "psych out" the testers as the safest strategy for academic survival, and (2) they rarely represent or simulate the tasks by which initiated professionals will be judged--as in academic publications or in applied problems of human and organizational relationships.

Carl Rogers (1969:189-202) suggests that university-entrance selection procedures be rigorously directed toward the desired characteristics of creative professional performance rather than success in school survival skills, that testing procedures during professional socialization be deemphasized, and that final evaluations be conducted by external authorities. The latter suggestion is specifically aimed to take off the teachers the double load of mentor and evaluator in which the tensions of dual loyalty to student and society often undermine the performance as mentor or evaluator. It is like asking the football coach to act as referee in the game.

The problem underlying these suggestions is simply that the models of ritual initiation and institutionalized ordeals do not simulate or stimulate the competencies some would wish of a creative professional. As one researcher into scientific creativity suggested,

> A knowledgeable person in science is not, as we are often wont to think, merely one who has an accumulation of facts, but rather one who has the capacity to have sport with what he knows, giving creative rein to his fancy in changing his world of phenomenal appearances into a world of scientific constructs. (MacKinnon quoted in Rogers, 1969:181)

2. Socialization to Bureaucratic Dependency

Anthropologists have not found it difficult to recognize a social function of compulsory schooling as socialization to bureaucratic dependency. We can easily see that children are taught to acquiesce to bureaucratic authority, to develop patterns of reliability in bureaucratic or industrial time scheduling, and to accept as inevitable and just the judgmental labels distributed by schools. Are we equally willing to look at the patterns by which neophyte anthropologists are socialized into bureaucratic dependency upon the university and upon the agencies which fund their professional activities?

In the last several decades there have developed some beliefs and practices that can only be described in this way. Even now, the idealized goal of most anthropology departments is to turn out initiates who will succeed in the currently fierce competition for prestigous university faculty appointments. The recognition of a future dependence on careers outside of higher education is very much with us, but there is no change in the status hierarchy of the profession--communicated to neophytes in the process of professional socialization. University teaching is best, applied jobs are for those who don't capture an academic slot.

In the departments I know best, the faculty feel a strong paternalistic responsibility for their graduate students. Every effort is made to find financial support for those students judged as potentially successful in the rituals of transition. It is a deep source of faculty shame if successful graduates are not "placed" through their major professor's or departmental contacts, whether in academic or applied work.

Even the major models of non-academic careers appear to be tied to large-scale bureaucratic organizations--government, corporations, or foundations. The idea of individual entrepreneurship is rarely discussed, though we do have successful models in the profession.

In the sponsorship of research, it is always considered important to get a "grant," regardless of financial need. Unfunded research is somehow less than legitimate, at least for neophytes on the dissertation level. The idea of self-sponsored research is anathema. Does anybody remember how Benjamin Whorf supported his anthropological career? What has happened to our myth of the celebrated American entrepreneur who searches for resources by himself and creates commercial or self-reliant enterprises? Even our history of the survival strategies and resourcefulness of anthropologists in the last great depression is only slowly coming back to light.

Some social workers have begun to perceive another form of bureaucratic dependency in their professional socialization. Cloward and Piven, in their article, "The Acquiescence of Social Work," suggest that the transition rites of professional social work are designed to support the mythology of the agencies within which their students hope to be employed. They say,

> One striking feature of professional socialization [in social work] is the frequent presumption that students know virtually nothing.... Students quickly sense that although they may be mature, resourceful, and committed adults, they are often credited with very little.... Students educated to mistrust their own judgment, and feelings are then ready to be trained to acquiesce to the authority of others. Professional education is, in no small part, training in submission to bureaucratic authority. (p. 59)

This training, they suggest, makes it difficult for social-work students to perceive that the agencies for which they work are not necessarily benign in their relationships with their clients, what is good for the agency is not necessarily good for the client, that the social effects of poverty and inequality are often treated as problems of individual psychological defects, and that images of professional knowledge are

often used to unjustly enforce bureaucratic power over people. I suspect that unexamined faith in the universities and organizations we expect to employ our students is a product of our anthropological schooling rituals.

3. Inductive Research vs. Deductive Teaching

Until one has struggled to create and make sense out of voluminous fieldwork data, to devise an index, identify key observations, and make inferences about real social systems in complex contexts, there is no way we can teach the ethnographic research process. I am struck, however, by the opposition of our common deductive teaching paradigm with the inductive ethnographic model of knowing. It is impossible to transmit, in deductive logical models of presentation, the analytical processes that underlie ethnographic research presentations.

Inductive models of professional teaching do exist, however, and we have a few outstanding models of inductive socialization. The Spradley and McCurdy text, The Cultural Experience, suggests how an introductory course in anthropology can be organized around student ethnographic exercises. Yet some doctoral students have not conducted such an exercise before they set off for the dissertation fieldwork. Fieldwork, itself, is a lonely professional enterprise, but the analytical process which follows is even lonelier. Some of our neophytes have not been forewarned.

L. S. B. Leakey's guidance of Jane VanLawick Goodall's professional socialization to anthropology represents a larger model of inductive initiation. He sent her off to the field to observe chimpanzees for several years before recommending her admission to a program of study in anthropology. With a wealth of field observation already accomplished, she was ready to absorb a worldview--a theoretical framework that would make sense out of her experience. Perhaps more of us should experiment with such alternative models of professional socialization.

The recruitment of inexperienced graduate students coming straight through the school system reinforces the tendency to teach didactically. Perhaps more attention should be paid to recruiting people with previous significant cross-cultural experience and with some history of an ability to survive on their own, independent of school connections. It is my experience that teaching is enhanced and bureaucratic dependency is reduced with such students.

4. The Significance of Playfulness

After reflecting on the previous observations and recommendations, I note a serious flaw. They are much too sober and serious. The anthropology of anthropology was intended to be a humorous look at ourselves, a playful exercise in an application of anthropology. Our symposium organizer, Barbra Frankel, rates some kind of educational award for following one of our basic principles in educational anthropology derived from ethological studies of primates and ethnographic reports of hunting and gathering societies. In populations uncorrupted by the rituals of "modern" schooling, the critical functions of play as a juvenile learning process for all of us primates has been widely observed. (cf. Herzog 1974) If we have any youthfulness left, what better strategy could be found for the initiation and continuing education of anthropologists? The puritanical principle that learning requires suffering is not supported by our discipline. Anthropology can be fun. Playfulness can be a productive intellectual tool. If that can be communicated among the rituals of schooling, too, we may yet take encouragement for our scientific and human future as anthropologists.

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